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Senior Rally draws overflow crowds

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By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

The 2007 State Senior Adult Rally is a perennial favorite among seniors in Baptist churches in Mississippi. This year was no exception.

The event, hosted by Mississippi College (MC), Clinton, registered 1,163 participants from 102 churches, representing 64 towns in the state, according to Glenn Shows, consultant in the Discipleship and Family Ministries Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Christian humorist Dennis Swanberg was the big draw, bringing participants from churches as far away as Tupelo, Pontotoc, and Olive Branch, on down to the Jackson area and the Gulf Coast.

As "The Swan" greeted visitors one by one upon their arrival at Nelson Hall, he also was dead serious about his love for MC. It's the Baptist university where his son Dusty is now a senior and another son, Chad, graduated in 2005 with a degree in accounting. Chad works with Swanberg Ministries, based in West Monroe, La.

"Wherever I go, I take MC stuff. It's been so good to my boys," said Swanberg, a Baylor University graduate who grew up a huge fan of Mississippi Baptist and country comedian Jerry Clower. "MC is a great place."

Swanberg brings his impressions of characters like TV's lovable Mayberry deputy Barney Fife to audiences nationwide at 175 events annually. He raved about the crowd of folks, 55-years-old and up, packing MC's Swor Auditorium and spilling over to seats in the aisles and nearby hallways. "I love my seniors," he said.

At the rally, the overflow crowd at the event included folks like Jeris White, 66, a member of Thaxton Church in Pontotoc County. "We love the fellowship of the people," said White, who purchased some Swanberg tapes along the way. "The services are so awesome," she says of the church rallies for seniors she's attended in Gatlinburg, Tn., Branson, Mo., and now MC.

It's the senior adults who make the annual time for fellowship so amazing and add so much to churches in their communities every Sunday. "Senior adults are the backbone of churches," Swanberg said.

Others making the trip to the rally included Ridgeland resident Raymond Ball, senior adult minister at Westview Church in Jackson. The church has 150 senior adult members.

His wife Marcia, church pianist Linda Beard, Evelyn Gosa, former president of the Son Lighters senior adult group, were among others from Westview enjoying the rally. So were the dozen on hand from Parkway Church in Tupelo. The list of churches sending delegations seemed endless.

Attendees also heard selections from the Visionaries Choir of First Church in Hattiesburg, and during breakout sessions were entertained by Terry-based juggler and musician Rick Bewley.

Tom Crocker, a consultant with LifeWay Christian Resources in Memphis, discussed the "significance of success" for senior adults.

Dennis Daniels, serving in pastoral care ministries of First Church, Jackson, also led a conference on developing a servant's heart.

A buffet-style luncheon with Swanberg closed out the day.



"THE SWAN" — Dennis Swanberg, a Christian humorist from West Monroe, La., entertains the participants at the State Senior Adult Rally held Aug. 30 at Mississippi College, Clinton.

(Andy Kanengiser, university news coordinator for Mississippi College, contributed to this report.)

Miss. CP slips in September

Gifts to the work of the Lord through the Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) in September were down over the previous month and the same period last year, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson. The September total of \$2,282,020, was \$1,107,556, or 32.7%, below than the \$3,389,576 given last month, and \$515,971, or 18.4% lower than the total given in September 2006. Total Mississippi CP giving for the current fiscal year, which runs from January-December, stands at \$25,993,535, a rise of \$77,731, or .3%, over last year's giving through September, and \$1,101,834, or 4.4%, ahead of current budget needs. The 2007 Mississippi CP budget of \$33,188,934, was approved by messengers to the 2006 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. A total of \$2,765,745 is needed each month to meet the convention board's budget for 2007. In addition to helping support more than 10,700 missionaries in the U.S. and around the world through affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention, Mississippi CP helps fund such programs as the Accompanist Conference at Brandon Church, Brandon, on October 27, and the Youth Ministers Retreat on November 5-7 at Lake Tiak O'Khata near Louisville.

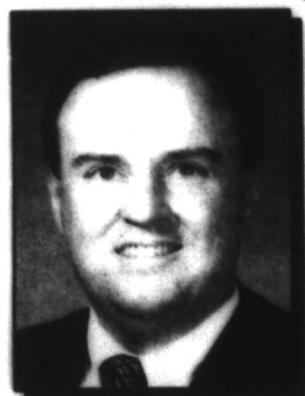
SBC CP rises for month

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Giving to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) in September was \$17,912,692, which was 14.4%, or \$2,250,204, above the \$15,662,488 given in August, and 2.5%, or \$434,776, than the \$17,477,916 received in September 2006, according to SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman. A total of \$205,716,834 was received by the Southern Baptist Convention during the fiscal year from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30 — up by \$5,115,298 from the previous fiscal year's \$200,601,536 when Southern Baptists topped the \$200 million mark for the first time. Counting an additional \$204,996,501 in designated gifts, the fiscal year marked the first time that Southern Baptists surpassed the \$400 million mark in overall giving to SBC national causes for spreading the Gospel worldwide. The \$4,962,666 in designated gifts received last month is \$1,086,262 above the \$3,876,404 received in September 2006, an increase of 28%. The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. It is separate from the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Fund, of which 100% of monies go to aid the needy in the general public.

MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS



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An unnecessary controversy

It's been several weeks now since comedienne Kathy Griffin had her 15 minutes of fame at the Emmy Awards, where she managed to insult the whole of Christendom with her offensive remarks about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. At base, what she said was poor taste at its most poor.

In case you missed the Emmy Awards, here's the direct quote from Griffin as she accepted an Emmy for best reality program for her Bravo Cable network show, *My Life on the D-List*:

*A lot of people come up here and thank Jesus for this award. I want you to know that no one had less to do with this award than Jesus. **** it, Jesus. This award is my god now.*

Needless to say, the **** notation is a word that cannot be printed in a family newspaper in the context it was used by Griffin. That part of her remarks was edited out of the delayed broadcast that aired on E! cable network, but the uncensored version

has been widely available on the Internet and cable talk shows like *Larry King Live*. If you've never heard of Kathy Griffin, you're not alone. A 46-year-old

native of the Chicago area, Griffin's career has not exactly set Hollywood on fire. Even the tongue-in-cheek reference in her show's title to being on the "D-List" refers to her minor standing among show business elites.

Griffin may be better known for her voice work than her minimal acting and comedy careers. She has been the voice in the background for Vaseline Intensive Care commercials and a host of other products, as well as providing character voices on *The Simpsons* television show and others.

However, Griffin's crowning career achievement, at least in some circles, seems to be her hosting of the annual GayVN Awards, which recognizes the "best" productions in the field of homosexual adult entertainment. Stripped of its semantic niceties, that means she is involved in the promotion of pornography.

Like many aging stars — or, as in Griffin's case, star wannabes — with careers in free-fall decline, Griffin felt it necessary to say something outrageous in an attempt to move the spotlight on to herself. It worked, if only for a brief time before the American public, ever hungry for new celebrity scandal, moved on.

How sad. Equally as sad, however, was Griffin's flippant defense of her remarks: "Am I the only Catholic left with a sense of humor?"

Does Griffin actually believe she is the one who has been wronged? Like many Hollywood types who consider the space between New York City and Los Angeles to be "flyover country," Griffin probably thinks of heartland Christians as backward, poorly educated fundamentalists who aren't hip enough to understand her off-color attempt at humor. At least, that's the way Christian characters are portrayed to audiences in many Hollywood productions.

Suffice to say, if Griffin had said, "**** it, Muhammad," or "I want you to know that no one had less to do with this award than Buddha," the mainstream news media would have been all over her, calling for her firing from *My Life on the D-List* and demanding boycotts of her products.

Christians are fair game, however. This whole incident is nothing less than another strong indication of the impact Christians have, and seek to have, on the larger culture. Some people don't like the sound of that. Many Hollywood elites are plainly upset about it. They have targeted us for many years, and will continue to do so for many more years.

May we be strong enough to withstand their slurs and humiliations, and still keep our focus on Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20). After what He did for us, it's the least we can do in return.

GUEST OPINION:



Our complicit news media

By Kelly Boggs, editor
Louisiana Baptist Message
Alexandria, La.

euphemism for those that indulge in sadomasochism, also known as S&M. These are individuals that enjoy bondage, whipping, spanking, and other unmentionable perversions.

While the Folsom Street Fair does draw a few heterosexual sadomasochists to the event, it is clear from reports that the overwhelming number celebrating were homosexuals — mostly male.

The most detailed report of the event came from Pink News, an organization that describes itself as "Europe's largest gay news service."

"American police adopted a distinctly relaxed approach to this year's Folsom Street Fair in San Francisco," Pink News observed, "taking little notice of the hundreds of men baring their genitals on every street corner."

According to Pink News, there were orgies in the street, drawing "laughs and photographs from curious onlookers but no police action." Homosexual men and women walked down the street, completely naked and

performing sex acts, the website reported. (Keep in mind the website provided far more detailed descriptions.)

Sounds like a wonderful event, doesn't it? So why did the news media ignore a gathering of 400,000 people? What would cause them to collectively look the other way? Because the Folsom Street Fair is as much a celebration of unbridled homosexual behavior as it is a fetish festival.

If the truth of what took place in the streets of San Francisco on September 30 were broadcast from sea to shining sea, the homosexual rights movement would suffer a significant setback. If grassroots Americans saw homosexuals blatantly flaunting their sexuality in public, they would be appalled.

Make no mistake about it: America's major news organizations are complicit in promoting homosexuality. Hence, they chose to act as if the Folsom Street Fair did not even happen.

Even a bit of controversy did not cause the major news groups (apart from a few conservative

talk show hosts) to give the event any attention. This year's Folsom Street Fair official promotional poster featured a parody of Da Vinci's Last Supper with Jesus and his disciples replaced by costumed sadomasochists with sex toys on the table.

Two conservative organizations, Concerned Women for America and the Catholic League, both called attention to the poster. That led to an additional controversy over Miller Brewing Company, one of the fair's major sponsors. While Miller did not pull its money from the event, it did instruct the fair's organizers to remove its logo from the poster.

Even with two major public policy groups calling attention to the event and its promotion, no major news organization, with the exception of Fox News, made any reference to the controversy.

According to Texas Media Watch, a non-partisan and independent media monitoring project, the most prevalent evidence of news bias can be found in the stories a news organization chooses to cover and the ones it chooses to ignore.

Let the infamous and unbiblical Fred Phelps and six of his followers show up to protest anywhere, and it will make the news — but 400,000 people show up at the Folsom Street Fair and the media completely ignores it because they understand it will have a negative impact on the homosexual movement.

Still think there's no media bias?

Boggs' commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

So. Baptists assisting Peru earthquake victims

ICA, Peru (BP) -- Thousands of people left homeless and hungry by a massive earthquake in Peru's desolate southern desert are being helped, thanks to the generosity of Southern Baptists who give to their World Hunger Fund.

At least 519 people were killed and 60,000 homes were destroyed when a quake that registered 8.0 on the Richter scale struck Peru's central coast Aug. 15. The shock wave leveled most of the buildings in the port city of Pisco, where many structures were built of unreinforced adobe brick.

"The towns of Ica, Pisco, Chincha, Canate were heavily damaged and many smaller communities were totally destroyed," said Jim Brown, U.S. director for Baptist Global Response, a Southern Baptist international development and relief organization. "The highway from Lima was damaged to the extent that large trucks with relief supplies can't get through. The government had to send the first relief supplies in by air."

Villagers will have a hard time recovering from the earthquake because clearing debris means their crops must go untended, said Rick Miller, who is coordinating Southern Baptist disaster relief efforts in the area.

"I was in a community yesterday and asked what they plan on doing concerning rebuilding," Miller said. "Their houses are completely destroyed and they are living in thatched housing or shelters made of scrap plastic and cardboard. They replied that the men are in the fields all day long and don't have time to clean the debris. They need help with debris removal before they can even begin to rebuild their homes."

The unusually strong quake generated international publicity and tons of relief supplies poured into Peru. Much of it,



HELPING HANDS — Two Peruvian Baptist relief workers (seated on stools) minister to a family in Ica whose lives were thrown into turmoil by the August 15 earthquake. Many thousands of Peruvians have been left homeless and hungry by the massive temblor. (BP photo by Jim Brown)

however, reportedly wound up on sale in local markets, while many smaller communities have received little or no assistance, Miller said.

That makes private relief efforts in those communities more critical, said Brown, who traveled to the affected area to assess the needs. He made the trip with South Carolina Baptist Convention disaster relief director Cliff Satterwhite, who is coordinating the Southern Baptist earthquake relief effort in Peru because of his state's existing relationship with Baptists there.

"We know other groups have been providing relief in certain

areas, but it appears that in Ica only Baptists and local Salvation Army volunteers are working," Brown said. "One of our ministry partners, Proteccion Cristiana Civil, also sent in an assessment team, looking for areas aid isn't reaching."

Christian response to the disaster was amazing, Brown said. "Peruvian Baptists and other Christian workers immediately jumped in with both feet to respond," he said. "Volunteers traveled four hours from Lima to get to the scene, and Pepe Flores, the president of Peruvian Baptist Convention, personally traveled to the area, with a partner from British Baptist Mission, to see how churches could help."

"The president's visit greatly encouraged the believers in Ica. They have seen a steady stream of volunteers coming

to help. It was exciting to see people who care connecting with people in need."

The initial assessment team carried in blankets, food staples, water, plastic sheeting and hygiene kits purchased with a \$50,000 emergency allocation from Southern Baptist relief funds. An allocation of \$33,726 from the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund jump started community kitchens in 50 communities — cooking operations run by the residents themselves.

Food kits of rice, lentils, noodles and oil sent by Southern Baptists are being supplemented locally with potatoes and chicken or fish, enough to feed 5,000 people for up to two months. Each community food kit provided 500 meals at a cost of \$113.

Burma action urged

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has called on the United States and the United Nations to mount an international effort to hold the Burmese military regime accountable for its violent crackdown on peaceful demonstrations. The bipartisan commission's October 4 written request urged the U.S. government to take the lead by working for condemnation by the U.N. Security Council and Burma's neighbors of the junta's deadly suppression of dissent. Burma also is known as Myanmar. The call by USCIRF came after the regime put down protests in late September by killing some protesters and jailing others. Richard Land, USCIRF's vice chairman and president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, urged Americans and others to stand with the Burmese people. "As a member of USCIRF and as an American and a Baptist who believes in soul freedom, I believe it is incumbent on all freedom-loving people to speak out in support of Burmese citizens who are struggling so courageously and speaking out so heroically for the basic freedoms that we so often take for granted," Land said. The State Department has included Burma on its list of "countries of particular concern" (CPC) ever since it began issuing an annual report on international religious freedom.

Looking back

10 years ago

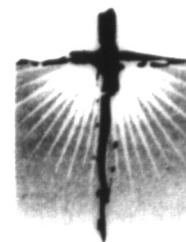
In the largest religious gathering in American history, an estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 men gather on the national mall in Washington, D.C., for the Stand in the Gap rally sponsored by Promise Keepers October 4.

20 years ago

The Southern Baptist Convention Public Affairs Committee votes 8-4 to suggest the SBC sever ties with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Washington-based church-state agency made up of nine Baptist bodies.

30 years ago

A record 333 students enroll for the fall semester at Golden Gate Seminary in California, a nine percent increase over the previous record, with 119 attending seminary for the first time.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. *(I have sinned.)*
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. *(I repent.)*
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

MEMORIES

Memory is a fascinating thing. Some people seem to have a lot more of it than others. Some of you may be like me. My memory is what I use to forget with, but still there are incidents and experiences in life that are so profound and so indelibly imprinted on our brains as well as our emotional makeup that we seem to recall them as though they were yesterday. A worldwide study was done surveying people about their most memorable experience. They asked people what things they remembered more than any other event.

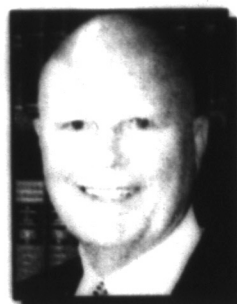
When I heard about the question, I began to think of the memories in my own memory bank of worldwide events that seem to stand out above the others. The first one that came to mind was the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. From there my mind went in about a dozen different directions seemingly all at the same time. The worldwide survey revealed the following three events as the most memorable.

Number one was the fall of the Berlin Wall. I remember that event clearly. I sat up into the early morning hours watching live television of people with picks, axes, shovels, and sticks tearing down the wall as they chanted and cheered.

The second was the first moon landing. I remember sitting in our living room after church on a Sunday night and holding our few-weeks-old first child and explaining to her what was taking place as the landing took place and Neil Armstrong stepped out onto the surface of the moon.

The third event was the release of Nelson Mandela from prison after he had spent about a quarter of a century there. In my memory, the buildup of media coverage and commentary was even more vivid.

One of the things of greatest interest to me was that the three top events that caught worldwide attention in people's mem-



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

ory were all good things. I suppose it could be said that they were good things that came out of bad things. When the events happened, they were good news. In today's world where good news seems rarely to be promoted, folks' memory banks want to reach out and hold on to the good things. As they say in the world of communications today, "If it bleeds, it leads." Sadly, you could almost add to that, "If it is worthwhile it ends up on the trash pile."

For just a minute, would you not just delve into your memories of worldwide events, whether good or bad, but would you probe your memory about personal things? Things that, in fact, you have a grasp of in ways that no one else may have a clue. Take a moment and think about all that transpired in and around when you came to know the Savior. Of course, biblical salvation is not doing good things, going to great churches, or even being a part of religious activities as good as they may be. It is a meeting with Jesus. Do you remember when you met Christ? Maybe you were in church at a revival or in Vacation Bible School and someone sat down with you and shared the Good News from heaven. You were told how much God loved you and that He had sent His Only Begotten Son to die for your sins. Do you remember when you invited Him to come into your heart and you asked Him to forgive your sins, you trusted Him, and He saved you?

The reason I am asking you to probe your memory related to that moment in time is because it is the most important

moment in life and, in fact, in eternity. I believe you can make a biblical case for the fact that a million years from now if someone walked up to you in heaven and asked you what is the greatest memory you have of all of the experiences you have ever had you would say, "The day I met Jesus." True there are times and ways that each of us may stray from Him, but He does not let us go. If you know Him, He knows you. Your life is forever secure in His hands.

Paul was approaching the end time of his life when he wrote to Timothy, and he said, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him until that day" (II Tim. 1:12). From the day he met Jesus on the Damascus Road his memory bank kept in place where he met Jesus, the most significant event of his life. Do you know Him? Spend a moment in meditation contemplating that wonderful encounter and celebrating the confidence you can have in your Savior.

Would you take a few more minutes and just probe another part of your spiritual dimension? Pull up your most memorable time of service for the Lord. It may have been an incredible opportunity to share your faith with someone. It could be a block of time where it just seemed as though you moved along in the flow of God's will and experienced His power and presence on a mission trip. It could be that you recall an event in the life of your church when the Lord gave you the privilege of making a significant difference. Now as you think about those events and the joys of experiencing the grace of God at those times put them in the time frame of your life. See where they fit. Look at them closely and evaluate how long it has been since you have experienced something like that. None

of us lives every waking moment in the midst of shaking, heart-stopping service to Jesus, but if it has been years or decades since you willingly, purposefully, and significantly made decisions and performed acts of service for Jesus you may need to stop and ask Him, "Lord, what would you have me to do now?"

One final memory I would like for you to consider is one you do not possess. You may wonder how you can remember something that has not yet happened. I want you to think for a moment about a day that will come to everyone of us — the day you die. Now you cannot remember the place, circumstances, or the time because it has not yet happened. In fact, you will not control those surrounding events. What I want you to think about is that moment in light of your life and the stewardship of your time, energy, and influence. When that takes place will you be able to say that you have done all that the Lord wanted you to do and you are now ready to go? You do not have to live to be ancient to live with that kind of peace. Jesus was only 33 when He came to the conclusion of His life and earthly ministry. Before dying on the cross, He was able to say, "It is finished."

It was not just His life that was over; it was the accomplishment of what God wanted to do through Him both in His service and in His sacrificial death. It is finished! The Apostle Paul wrote his last letter to Timothy and in the last chapter said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4:7). Indeed he had and with his last breaths saw his life as being poured out like a drink offering that would be liquid, poured out on the ground, and quickly soaked up — but without question he was ready to go. You can be too, and you can live each day with awareness and a commitment to walking with God so that if today holds the last breath you take you will be ready. If you walk with Jesus in that manner, not only will that memory be good for you it will be good for every person who knows you.

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.

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MS POSITIONS

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CLEARY BAPTIST CHURCH, Florence, Miss., seeks a children's minister. Please submit resumes to M. Vance, 129 N. Eagle Ridge Drive, Florence, MS 39073.

NESHOPA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION is seeking an Associational Director of Missions. Resumes or other correspondence, may be sent to Gene Dobbs, P.O. Box 416, Philadelphia, MS 39350, no later than October 31.

MS STATE QUARTET CONVENTION, October 18-20

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Mothers, daughters enjoy time together at Garaywa

By Erica Harms
Correspondent

Just weeks into a new school year, approximately 200 moms and their first through sixth grade daughters took advantage of an opportunity to escape the daily schedules of life by attending an overnight camping experience on September 21-22 at Camp Garaywa in Clinton.

"Seeing the mothers and daughters together at camp is amazing. Not only can God be seen working in their individual lives, you can see Him bringing mothers and daughters together in a way that can't be done in our busy lifestyles today," said Jennifer Ingram, a 2007 unit leader at Camp Garaywa. "For two days, mothers and daughters can focus on two of the most important parts of their lives — their relationship with Christ and their relationship with each other."

Happy Birthday, Garaywa, the theme for the mother/daughter weekend, was chosen in honor of Garaywa's 60th birthday. Camp Garaywa.

"Celebrating the birthday of Garaywa means celebrating everything that God has done both on and off the campgrounds, in the lives of children, youth, and adults alike," said Brittany Prevost, one of the 2007 cabin leaders who helped host the weekend. "Garaywa is home to the hearts of so many and to truly take the time to recognize that God is at work is essential in giving God glory for all He has done and will continue to do at Camp Garaywa."

On Friday night, moms and daughters played birthday Bingo and pin the candle on the cake, and decorated cupcakes. Attendees of the weekend then had a time of worship around the campfire, concluding with a round of graham cracker and chocolate treats roasted over the open fire.

"The neatest thing about Mother-Daughter weekends is to see moms and daughters worshipping together, playing together and having a quiet time together," said Robin Keels, consultant for the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union.

"I think it is important for daughters to see their moms spending time with God. I love to watch the moms and daughters have a quiet time together," said Katie Welch, also a 2007 unit leader at camp.

Missionary visits from Chesed Dent, serving in the Pacific Rim, as well as Ellen Truex and her daughter Marianne, also serving in the Pacific Rim, were among the weekend activities.

"Too often we make the mistake of thinking that spiritual giants are the only ones who can make a difference in our world. The reality is that sometimes it's the small, innocent voices lifted up in prayer that carry us through. I love sharing with children about missions because their sincerity is so pure. When they say that they are going to pray for you, they mean it," Dent said.

According to Keels, weekends like these serve as an opportunity to put missions in front of Mississippi Baptist girls in a 24-hour time period. In the midst of learning about and giving to missions, the mothers and daughters also experienced a time of recreation, crafts, and worship.



TIME TOGETHER — An unidentified mother and daughter share study time during the September 21-22 mother/daughter weekend at Camp Garaywa in Clinton. The Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union schedules several mother/daughter weekends at Camp Garaywa during the year. (Photo by Erica Harms)

Preschool Care at 2007 Mississippi Baptist Convention Annual Meeting

Preschool care will be available for children by pre-registration, ages birth through five, at First Church, Jackson, during the 2007 Mississippi Baptist Pastors' Conference and the 2007 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, from noon on October 29 through the final session of the annual meeting on October 31. Call Michelle Sansing, childcare coordinator, at (601) 949-1997 to pre-register. All children must be pre-registered by Monday, October 22.

The preschool departments are located on the street level off North State Street.

Following are the procedures:

1. Pre-register by October 22 (see above), giving name and age of each child, the parent(s), and the church.
2. Upon arriving, pick up a security card for each child.
3. Be sure all belongings are labeled.
4. For infants, leave a time schedule for feeding.
5. Leave the children no earlier than 15 minutes before the beginning of a session and pick them up no later than 15 minutes after the close of the session.

Children may remain in the preschool area during the Convention lunch break on Tuesday if parents provide a sack lunch.

Homecomings & Revivals

Calvary Church, Natchez: 55th homecoming, Oct. 14; services, 11 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Mike Fort, speaker.

Corinth Church, Singleton: Homecoming, Oct. 14; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Shane McGivney, speaker; John Sharp, pastor.

Crossroads Church, Petal: 10th annual homecoming, Oct. 14; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by pot luck and singing, 1:30 a.m.; Jimmie Windham, pastor.

East Side Church, Magee: Homecoming and Revival, Oct. 14-17, 11 a.m. followed by lunch and fellowship; Ken Harrison, speaker; Sun.-Wed., Harry Gipson, speaker; Ray Gates, music; Z.T. Winningham, pastor.

Griffith Memorial Church, Jackson: Centennial Anniversary, Oct. 21; worship, 10:30 a.m.; meal, noon; celebration gathering, 1:30 p.m.; Steve Stone, speaker; Ian Richardson, music; for information, call (601) 372-7812.

First Church, Durant: Homecoming, Nov. 4; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by meal and afternoon reflection, 1:30 p.m.

First Church, Marks: Centennial Anniversary, Oct. 28; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by catered lunch; centennial video showing, 1 p.m.; casual open house Oct. 27, 6-8 p.m.; Gordon Sansing, speaker.

First Church, Nettleton: Homecoming, Oct. 21; services, 10 a.m., followed by lunch; George Johnson, speaker; Wade Murphy, music; Paul Sims, pastor.

Georgetown Church, Copiah County: Homecoming, Oct. 28; services, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish meal; Robert Hanvey, speaker; Trent Nethery, pastor.

North Calvary Church, Philadelphia: Homecoming, Oct. 14; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Michael Wells, speaker; Shelia Burnett, music; Lawrence Runnels, pastor.

Gooden Lake Church, Belzoni: Homecoming, Oct. 21; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by pot luck lunch; Billy Burge, speaker; New Genesis, music; Bob Gilliland, pastor.

Hebron Church, Meridian: 100th anniversary, Oct. 27-28; Sat., old time gospel sing and supper, 6 p.m.; Sun., services, 11 a.m., followed by lunch.

High Hill Church, Neshoba County: Homecoming and 126th anniversary, Oct. 21; services, 10 a.m., followed by noon lunch and gospel singing at 2 p.m.; L.C. Anthony, speaker; Southern Reign Quartet, music; Ray Files, pastor.

Main Street Church, Hattiesburg: Homecoming, Oct. 28; worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; Russell Bush, Jr., speaker; Jon M. Stubblefield, pastor.

Popp's Ferry Church, Biloxi: Revival, Oct. 14-17; 6 p.m. nightly; Clarence Cooper, speaker; Gilbert Emerson, music; Larry W. Yarber, pastor.

Mt. Carmel Church, Edinburg: Homecoming, Oct. 14; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by dinner; Joe Abel, speaker.

Rocky Point Church, Leake Association: Revival, Oct. 14-17; 7 p.m. nightly; Don Taylor, speaker; Nattalie Durcan Emmons, music; Marshall Lum, pastor.

Shelton Church, Moselle: 100th anniversary and homecoming, Oct. 14; Sunday School, 9 a.m.; worship, 10 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; speakers — members, former pastors, associational representatives, and Mississippi Baptist Convention Board representatives; Jesse Smith, music.

Sunrise Church, Leake County: Revival, Oct. 14-17; Sun., 11 a.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Randall Creel, speaker; Steve and Becky Carver, music.

Topisaw Church, Bogue Chitto: 125th Anniversary, Oct. 14; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds and afternoon singing and remembrance; Jim Futral, speaker.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Shared testimonies, Blue Springs Church, Blue Springs



2. Deacon Ordinations, Cash Church, Lena



3. Deacon Ordination, Trinity Church, Laurel



4. Perfect Attendance, First Church, Potts Camp

1. Former drug and alcohol abusers Bobby Palmertree and Larry Wasson shared their testimonies at Blue Springs Church, Blue Springs. They are members of Bethsaida Church, French Camp, and are available for speaking in local churches, and can be contacted at (662) 417-7612, 230-0055, or 633-7256. Shown are pastor Neil Davis, Wasson, Palmertree, and Jaysen Hogue.

2. Cash Church, Lena, recently ordained Danny Weaver and Donald Gunn as deacons. Shown are Weaver, Gunn, and pastor M.L. Wallace.

3. Trinity Church, Laurel, ordained Jake Spencer as deacon Aug. 26. Shown are Spencer and pastor Keith Yelverton.

4. First Church, Potts Camp, recognized those with perfect Sunday School attendance Sept. 16. Shown are Lynda McAlexander and Madalynne Ash, 19 years; Billy McAlexander, 18 years, and Etoyle Ash and Inez Jarrett, one year.

5. New Hope Church, Sumrall, held a baby dedication on Sept. 2. Shown are the participants. Charles Broome, pastor.

6. Seventy-two students from First Church, Kosciusko, attended Centri-Kid at Mississippi College July 30-Aug. 3. Shown are the participants.

7. Parkview Church, Greenville, ordained David Hughes, Sr., as deacon Sept. 30. Shown are Mimi Hughes, Hughes, and pastor Dennis Salley.

8. Corinth Church, Corinth, licensed Shane McGivney to the ministry Sept. 2. He is currently serving as associate pastor at Corinth and will be available for full time pastorate in January, 2008. Shown are McGivney and pastor John Sharp.

9. Bala Chitto Church, Magnolia, ordained James Boyd and Jimmy Brumfield as deacons Sept. 9 and activated Toxie Schmidt as an active deacon. Shown are pastor Dave Hartson, Brumfield, Boyd, and Schmidt.

10. The WMU of Lowndes County sponsored their 9th annual prayer walk at 28 different school sites in Columbus and Lowndes County Sept. 8, with about 440 people praying simultaneously.



5. Baby Dedication, New Hope Church, Sumrall



6. Centri-Kid Participants, First Church, Kosciusko



7. Deacon Ordination, Parkview Church, Greenville



8. McGivney Licensed to Ministry, Corinth Church, Corinth



9. Deacon Ordinations, Bala Chitto Church, Magnolia

JUST FOR THE RECORD



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS



11. Woodyear ordained, Highland Church, Laurel



12. Deacon Ordination, New Home Church, Fulton



13. Deacon Ordination, Flowood Church, Flowood



14. Fulton ordained as deacon, Spring Creek Church, Neshoba County

11. **Highland Church, Laurel**, ordained Jim Woodyear to the ministry Sept. 30. Shown are Woodyear, Sarah Woodyear, and Matt Buckles.

12. **New Home Church, Fulton**, recently ordained Kelly Wayne Knight as deacon. Shown are pastor Michael Warren, Knight, Staci Knight, and Addie Belle Knight.

13. **Flowood Church, Flowood**, ordained Randy Joe Donald as deacon Sept. 9. Shown are Donald, right, and deacon chairman Donnie Thomas.

14. **Spring Creek Church, Neshoba Association**, ordained Rob Fulton as deacon Aug. 26. Shown are pastor Whit Lewis, Fulton, Rozanne Fulton, and Sara Alice Fulton.

15. **First Church, Potts Camp**, held a baby dedication Sept. 23. Shown are the participants. Jim Buchanan, pastor.

16. **Liberty Church, Carroll-Montgomery Association**, recently honored Claver Blair for 46 years of service as music director of the church. Shown are Rodney Mainelli, current director; Jane Blair; Blair, and pastor Gary Tanner.

17. **Prentiss Church, Prentiss**, ordained Norman Presson as deacon Sept. 16. Shown are interim pastor Louis Smith, Presson, and Pat Presson.

18. **Liberty Church, Carroll County**, met their \$2000 Margaret Lackey Mission Offering goal.

19. The Wilsons, Shelbyville, Tenn., will be in concert at **Sulphur Springs Church, Conehatta**, Oct. 14, 6 p.m.

20. Second Chance will be in concert at **Bethlehem Church, Winona**, at the Oct. 14 evening service.

21. **Leflore Church, Holcomb**, held a youth pack the pews event Sept. 30. Miles Raney, speaker, had his head shaved in recognition of the youth's hard work. Five different churches participated.



15. Baby Dedication, First Church, Potts Camp



16. Blair honored, Liberty Church, Carroll-Montgomery Assoc.



17. Presson ordained as deacon, Prentiss Church, Prentiss



21. Raney's head shaved, Leflore Church, Holcomb

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ERN TIDW XG ZIHW, L
GEDICZ RITW XC ERN
WLP IA EDIJYTN; LCW RN
VCIKNER ERNH ERLE
EDJGE XC RXH.

CLRJH ICN: GNMNC

Clue: X = I

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John One: Thirty-Six.

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STATE CHANGE



Scruggs family, Calvary Church, Smithdale

Calvary Church, Smithdale, has called Travis Scruggs as pastor. Shown are Scruggs, his wife Beth, and children Shelby, Mikey, Harlie, Hannah, Mary, Caillou, and Nicholas.

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Mississippi Baptist Minister to Host

Alaska Cruise

And Pacific Northwest Vacation

On June 6, 2008, join your Spiritual Director, Baptist Minister Rev. Billy Williams on this 15-day vacation including a 7-day deluxe Alaska Cruise with Holland America Line and a 7-day Pacific Northwest vacation with Your Man Tours. Devotions will be made available daily while on board ship and some days on tour for those in the group who wish to participate. Rev. Williams, now retired, has served as a Baptist Minister for 48 years. For 23 years he was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Gautier, MS. He and his wife Rebecca have cruised Alaska's inside passage three times before. Once in 2005 as a Your Man Tours Baptist Chaplain on this same vacation package and again in June 2007. They liked it so much they're going back in 2008! They look forward to returning as your hosts visiting the land of the midnight sun during the year's longer daylight hours; during the last two weeks of pristine springtime. Your group will fly into Seattle for a night before a scenic motor coach drive to Vancouver where you'll board the five-star ms Statendam. Next, travel through a wondrous maze of forested island and glacier carved fjords, past charming coastal villages, migrating whales and calving glaciers to Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan and spectacular Glacier Bay. After the cruise you'll start a six-night motor coach tour with daily sightseeing visiting British Columbia; the Cascade Mountains; Washington; the Grand Coulee Dam; Lake Coeur d'Alene; Montana; two days at Yellowstone (Old Faithful) National Park, West Yellowstone, Grand Teton National Park; Jackson Hole, Wyoming; and in Utah: the Great Salt Lake, Mormon Tabernacle, and more. You'll fly home after a night in Salt Lake City. Prices for this 15-day vacation start at only \$1998 (per person, double occupancy). Included is the 7-day deluxe Alaska cruise, port charges and taxes, lots of motor coach sightseeing throughout the Pacific Northwest, 7 nights hotels, transfers, and baggage handling. Add \$600 for round-trip airfare from Memphis, TN; Birmingham, AL; or Gulfport/Biloxi, MS. Add \$700 for round-trip airfare from Jackson, MS. \$100 deposits are now due. Friends and family are welcome.

For information, reservations, brochure, and Rev. Williams' letter call:

'YOUR MAN' TOURS 1-800-968-7626

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Announcing a new partnership between New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Blue Mountain College. Starting in January 2008, New Orleans Seminary's North Mississippi Extension Center will offer Master of Divinity degree coursework on Mondays at the Blue Mountain campus.

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Food for Thought

October 14th is World Hunger Day. Offerings designated for world hunger are distributed between the International Mission Board (80%) and the North American Mission Board (20%). The Southern Baptist Convention created the World Hunger Fund to minister to the physical needs of hungry people across the world and to have the opportunity to minister to their spiritual needs as well. On foreign soil, hunger ministry takes the form of disaster relief, emergency rations delivered to people caught by famine, pestilence, or flood. Here in America, the hunger problem is addressed by traditional soup kitchens, block parties, kids clubs, tutoring programs, and Thanksgiving dinners. In 2006, \$1.4 million was channeled through 2,200 domestic hunger ministries, according to Sandy Wood of NAMB's ministry and servant evangelism team, all of it spent on food.

All across Mississippi, faith based organizations and others are focusing on alleviating hunger. In Brandon, New Day Food Club is using a creative approach to meet the needs of the hungry. "Help people help each other" is their slogan. Once a month, New Day

is a distribution center for units of food. One food unit costs \$28 and the October menu is:

(4) 5 oz. Ribeye Steaks, (1) 3 lbs. Breaded Frying Chicken, (1) 2 lbs. Salisbury Steak entrée w/ gravy, (1) 24.5 oz. Supreme Pizza, (1) 2 lb. Chicken Chunks, (1) 24 oz. Pork Roast, (1) 16 oz. Chicken Breast Fajitas, (1) 12 ct. Corn Tortilla, (1) 15 oz. Pork and Beans, (1) 16 oz. Fresh Carrots, (1) 24 oz. Homestyle Hashbrowns, (1) 16 oz. Corn, (1) 16 oz. Bean Soup Mix, (1) 5.5 oz Pancake Mix, (1) 7.5 oz Mac and Cheese, (1) 7 oz. Lasagna Dinner, and (1) Dessert Item.

All of this for only \$28. Anyone can buy a unit of food and deliver it to a needy family, a shut-in, a widow, or keep it for themselves. These items would cost between \$65-80 at a local grocery store and is the same high quality that one would find at a grocery store. There are no second-hand items, no damaged or out-of-date products, no dented cans without labels, no day-old bread and no fruit that is almost too ripe.



2007 World Hunger Emphasis

For more information on how to start a food distribution ministry like New Day Food Club, call Pastor Mark Howie (601-750-9500) or Ms. Earline Ashley (601-941-6047).

Matthew 7:7-11 (NASB) says, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to

you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or, if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!"

Southern Baptists have the opportunity to ask, seek, and knock. We ask our heavenly Father to show us where He is working. We seek to alleviate the physical and spiritual suffering of those with whom we share this world. We knock on the doors of others and invite them to share in the blessing of blessing others. In some instances, the non-Christian world is doing a good job at showing compassion to a needy hungry world. If lost people know how to give good gifts to their children, just imagine how much more God has to offer! Will you allow Him to use you to alleviate hunger? Volunteer for a food ministry in your area or give to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund. If you feed the belly, the soul often wells up for nourishment, too.



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THE VILLAGE VIEW



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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor with pride and respect those who are and have been special to our special friends.

SEPT. 24-OCT. 4, 2007

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Mrs. Lorena B. Newman
Ms. Martha Joy Herndon
Mrs. Lorraine Nunnery
Mr. & Mrs. Percy J. Peeler
Molly Pemberton
Ms. Mary K. Kidd
Sue Pepper
Mrs. Sheila Huffman
Reba Pevoy



The men's ministry of Beulah Church, Decatur, recently volunteered at The Baptist Children's Village. The group replaced flooring in a cottage.



Cheryl Grubbs, BCV Trustee President, presented Robert "Bob" King a plaque recognizing him for 39 years of service on The Baptist Children's Village Board of Trustees.

Ms. Eva Brister
Mary Ruth Pigott
West Side Elem School Employees
Mrs. Hilda Ratcliff
Mr. & Mrs. Carlos Knight
Lamar Rogers
Phil & Jackye Murray & Alan
Lexi Marie Sherwood
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Ainsworth
Austin Smith
Judy & Dave Lacy
Mr. Gary Smith
Robert & Sue Wilkie
Mrs. Thelma C. Smith
Robert & Sue Wilkie
Becky Spencer
Mrs. Gerry McGraw
Wade Spruill, Sr.
Mr. Chester A. Tapscott III
Bertha Lord Turner
Mr. & Mrs. Walter B. Moore
Mrs. Frances O. (Wheat) Tynes
M/M Hiram B. Stanford & Family
Mr. Earl Webb
Max & Jane Mitchell
Mr. James White
Robert & Sue Wilkie
Danny Williams
Margaret & Ron Chester & Family
Ray & Jeanne Wise & Family
Mary Edna Yeakum
Mr. & Mrs. Don E. Antrim
Mike Young
Bud & Charlotte Vickers
Mrs. Barbara Young
East Louisville BC-Louisville

The Baptist Children's Village
was featured in an article
in the Southern Style section
of The Clarion Ledger
on September 27, 2007.

You can read the article at
www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

High-Impact Believers

Matthew 5:13-20

By Alice Smith

Jesus is clear about our responsibility as Christians as we live in the world but not part of it. He gives two closely related similes in our Scripture text found in Matthew 5:13-20: salt and light. One of the purposes of salt is to preserve and keep from corruption, and light banishes darkness.

This study reminds me of an occasion when my husband and I went out to dinner. As we took our seats, I glanced over at a couple a few tables away. I remember thinking what an attractive couple they were. She was very stylish, sophisticated you might say. He was very distinguished. Their manner and dress indicated good taste and wealth. And then they did something that should not have

seemed so extraordinary. They reached across the table for each other's hands and bowed their heads in a quiet blessing of the food. That couple will never know what an impact they made on me as I witnessed their devotion to God. They were the real salt in that restaurant. They seasoned more than the food — they seasoned my life with their witness of our all-present God. That is what Jesus meant when he said we are to be the "salt of the earth." We are to impact, in a positive way, our society with our testimony of Jesus Christ.

Have you ever been in a very dark room, perhaps during a Christmas worship time? The smothering darkness seems to envelope you. Suddenly, a



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small candle is lit somewhere in the room and the darkness retreats. Another candle shines and another. Eventually, the room is bright with light and the darkness is pushed away. We are to be like the candle that, with its bright shining light, attacked the darkness.

We destroy the power of sin with the Light of the World.

Verse 13 (HCSB): "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled on by men."

We are to affect the world with our testimony of Jesus and we are to be careful that we do not allow that testimony to become worthless. It is a sad thing when we as Christians experience situations that damage our influence, or perhaps fail (as Peter did when he denied Jesus) to exercise our influence when it is needed. How tragic when we realize that we have

become worthless to God's work because we have been guilty of sin or of denying him through our ineffective Christian living. However, as we recognize this state in our own lives, Jesus will forgive us and we must remember that he makes possible "a land of beginning again."

A little salt goes a long way. Some of us must be careful not to over-salt with our Christian influence so that we turn people away. By this I mean that we should always be witnesses of Christ in an atmosphere of love and from an overflow of our recognition of our own unworthiness before Christ and our own need of the daily cleansing of Christ's forgiveness, not from an overflow of self-righteousness and harshness.

In Verses 14 and 16 (HCSB) we read: "You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. (16) In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Yes, we are to shine brightly with the Hope of Christ in the midst of the darkness of sin in our societies today. Those with whom we live — our families, among friends, in the workplace, in our churches, at our parties — must see our lives reflecting Christ's teachings of moral excellence. Remember that our right living is for the sole purpose of bringing glory to God, not glory to us!

As we study verses 17-20, we are told point blank by Jesus that he did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it. He said not one tiny, minute thing in the law would be changed. His fulfillment interjected his righteousness into the law. When asked what the greatest commandment was, he rolled them all up into one: Matthew 22:37 (HCSB): "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And he said, in verse 39: The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

Smith is a member of First Church, Jackson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Be Patient with Others

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

By Michael Smith

In the well-known poem *The Road Less Taken*, Robert Frost meditates upon the consequences of the direction one chooses to go in life: "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I — I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." For Frost, choosing one road over another made all the difference. Robert Frost's notion of two roads is not totally unique. Jesus teaches that there are two roads in life — a broad road that leads to destruction and a narrow road that leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14). Many will take the broad road of rejecting Christ. Few will take the narrow road of following Christ. Those who reject Christ face imminent judgment and condemnation. Those who follow Christ have already received the gift of eternal life and the promise of living eternally in the

presence of God. Though the destinies of the ungodly and the godly are quite different, they will coexist while traversing through the here and now. How should those who have received Christ relate to those who have rejected Christ? Jesus provides the answer to that question in the parable of the wheat and the weeds.

1. Patience Is Essential (Matthew 13:24-30)

Matthew 13 is comprised of a discourse which includes seven parables. The common theme that connects these parables is the two competing responses to the King and his Kingdom. A parable is a story with familiar surface details that conveys a spiritual truth. In the parable of the wheat and the weeds, Jesus tells the story of a farmer who sows seeds in his field. In the cover of darkness, an enemy sabotages his crop by sowing weeds



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among the wheat. When the wheat begins to sprout, so do the weeds. The workers are perplexed by the predicament. Their natural reaction is to pull the weeds; however, the farmer warned against the possibility of plucking the wheat prematurely.

He instructs the workers to patiently wait until the harvest. At that time, the wheat and the weeds would be separated. For now, however, the wheat and the weeds could just grow together. Jesus' parable teaches the principle of patience. Specifically, Jesus' parable illustrates God's sovereign patience towards the ungodly and teaches the principle of faithful living and fruitful patience of the godly towards the ungodly. As followers of Christ, we must patiently walk among those who reject Christ until God brings an end to the here and now. It is important to note, however, that patience does not imply passiveness. Patience is not passive. Patience is proactive. As the heirs of God's promises, we must not

passively wait around; we must proactively await Christ's coming. We proactively await Christ's coming when we care for the hurting and share hope with the hopeless.

2. Trust Is Necessary (Matthew 13:36-39)

Jesus did not provide an explanation for most of his parables. He fully expected spiritually minded folks to understand the spiritual principles of his parables. In this instance, however, Jesus explains the details of his parable. The details of the parable of the wheat and the weeds illuminate the assurance of God's final victory. God's redemptive purposes, accomplished in Jesus, will be fully realized on the Day of Judgment. On that day, God will fully fulfill his promises both to the godly and the ungodly. Those who have rejected Christ will be rejected by Christ, the King and Judge. The righteousness of God will be vindicated by the judgment and condemnation of the unrighteous. The assurance of God's final victory should culminate trust. As followers of Christ, we can firmly trust that God's judgment will be just and his timing will be timely. We can

and should reserve our judgment of the ungodly and their godless behavior by entrusting the task of judgment to the righteous Judge. We are unworthy and incapable of judging the evil behavior of the ungodly. Further, our criterion for judging the behavior of the ungodly is flawed. We desire to judge based on what people have done TO us. God will judge based on what people have done WITH Jesus. We should trust God and entrust the judgment of the ungodly to God.

3. Rewards Will Come (Matthew 13:40-43)

You and I must live with a healthy perspective of the Day of Judgment. A healthy perspective of the Day of Judgment is defined by both a joyful heart and a burdened heart. We can and should rejoice in Christ's righteousness and passionately anticipate the precious words, "Well done my good and faithful servant." We should equally grieve over the condemnation of the lost and regret that anyone would hear the words, "Depart from me, for I do not know you."

Smith is pastor of Bethel Church, Monticello.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will

be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be

clear, sharp, and well-lighted. **Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.**

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE BAPTIST
Record

So. Baptists growing presence among Sikh followers

DELHI, India (BP) — "There is but one god. True is his name, creative his personality and immortal his form. He is without fear, sans enmity, unborn and self-illuminated."

This plausibly may sound like worship of the God of Christianity, but then comes these words: "By the Guru's grace he is obtained."

Drawn from the Guru Granth Sahib — the book which Sikhs consider the holy and inspired words of their gurus — this passage is recited regularly by devout Sikhs, and they sing it aloud at their gurdwaras, or temples.

Most Sikhs, however, have never heard about the gift of grace offered to them through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jatt Sikhs (pronounced jut SIKS) make up 42.5% of the population of the Indian state of Punjab and are the least evangelized people group among the Punjabis of India.

"When I learned that the Jatts were the largest of the Punjabi-speaking people groups in India and one of the least reached, I got a real burden for them," said Irene Wayne (name changed for security purposes), the Southern Baptist strategy coordinator for the Jatt Sikh people group.

"They are so key to reaching all of the Punjabis of India," she added.

"Prayer has to undergird everything we do," Wayne said. "I view the prayer supporters as a key part of the team. The intense prayer of the righteous is very powerful" (James 5:16 HCSB).



GATHERING LOSTNESS — Sikh men, easily distinguished by the turbans they wear over their uncut hair, gather at a Sikh temple in Amritsar, India. Southern Baptists are reaching out to Sikh followers in India with the Good News of Jesus Christ. (BP photo)

Christians among this people group already have seen a difference since missions strategists initiated the day of petition and intercession for the Jatt Sikh on the first Wednesday of October two years ago.

"Prayer is saturating the hard ground so that the seed of the Word can take root," said Sydney Singh (name changed for security purposes), a Jatt Sikh-background believer. "Prayer supporters are helping us and are part of this whole mission."

"Jatt" refers to an Indian caste, and the Jatt Sikh people are those who follow the Sikh religion. The majority of the 11 million Jatt Sikhs in India live in Punjab, a state in northern India. Traditionally, Jatt Sikhs are farmers and

landowners who tend to be influential in their spheres of life.

"They are very hospitable. I've found my Jatt Sikh friends to be quite friendly," Wayne said. "It is impossible to know them and not like them."

The Jatt Sikh cultural identity also can act as a barrier to their acceptance of the Gospel. Jatt Sikhs take great pride in their Sikh heritage and traditions and never come to see that Jesus is different from their own gurus, or teachers. They do not understand that He came to die for them. To them, Jesus is a foreign guru.

"Society is so mixed with the culture," Sydney said. "One barrier is the belief that 'Christians are not people like us.' For them, Christianity is so different from their culture."

Wayne said that one friend has told her, "Your way is good for you, and our way is good for us."

"They view Christianity as a foreign religion that has no bearing on them as followers of the Sikh religion," Wayne said.

Sikhism teaches that there is one god. Sikhs follow the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev, the first guru and founder of Sikhism, along with the nine Sikh gurus who followed him, and the Sikh scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib, which they consider the final and living guru.

Barriers are being overcome as Christians use references to grace in the Sikh scriptures as a bridge into conversations about how Jesus is the way to grace and salvation. Also, Jatt Sikh-background Christians are implementing a "satsang" style of worship that more closely relates to their culture. Satsang, which literally means "true company," is a lecture and reflection style of worship. Someone reads a Bible passage and then the group discusses it.

Along with the prayers of intercessors, these new methods are bringing a growing number of Jatt Sikhs to a saving knowledge of Christ.

"We've really seen more happen over the past couple years since there has been global, focused, intentional prayer for the Jatt Sikhs," Wayne said.

Sydney agreed. "Three years back there was no revival of sorts among the Jatt Sikhs, but now people are becoming aware of the Jatt Sikhs and more are working among them, and more Jatt Sikhs are coming to faith," he said. "People are getting to know this people group because they are praying for them."

The need for prayer for the Jatt Sikhs is still great.

"The primary prayer need is for the Jatts to hear and respond to the Good News of Jesus," Wayne said. "Along with this, a real need is prayer for faithful men and women who have come to the Lord to be bold in sharing their story with others, and for more house churches. Also for men of peace who will become the ones sharing and starting new house churches."

Editor's note: For more information about the Jatt Sikhs of India, visit www.go2southasia.org/peoples/p_jatt_sikh.html.

Christians building bridges to practitioners of Sikh faith

DELHI, India (BP) — Within the large halls of the gurdwara, the congregation stands or sits together with heads covered and feet bare. Their hands are folded in prayer. They face the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh scriptures, and listen as one member recites the congregational prayers.

Every so often, they murmur together in Punjabi, "Waheguru," or "Wonderful lord."

"The Guru Granth Sahib is kept in the center on a raised area," explained Irene Wayne (not her real name), the Southern Baptist strategy coordinator for the Jatt Sikh people group in India. "There is a canopy over it, and someone waves a feathered fan over it to keep flies from falling on it and 'contaminating' it."

At the end of the prayers, each member of the congregation bows with his head touching the floor in reverence to the Guru Granth Sahib. The service ends with the words of the common Sikh greeting, "Sat Sri Akal," which means, "god is truth."

To the followers of Sikhism, religion is all about the search for truth. Sikhs believe in one god and that he is the supreme creator and embodiment of truth. To reach god, Sikhs believe a person must live a life of intense devotion and self-discipline.

Guru Nanak Dev founded Sikhism in the 15th century. Sikhs revere Guru Nanak, as well as the nine gurus who followed him. They treat the gurus' writings, compiled in a book that Sikhs consider the final and "living guru," as their sacred scripture. They call these



SIKH WORSHIPPERS — Devout Sikhs worship at a Sikh temple, or "gurdwara," where they offer "ardas," or prayers. Sikhs strive to live a pure life that will free them from the cycle of reincarnation. Sikhs consider their holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib, to be one of the gurus they revere in that process. (BP photo)

texts the Guru Granth Sahib.

Devout Sikhs will devote part of each day to reciting portions from the Guru Granth Sahib.

"There are set portions of the Sikh scriptures that can be read, and each has to be read in full at one time," Wayne said. "They are kind of like chapters. Some are longer than others."

Sikhs also have special scripture readings on the eve of a significant event in hopes that the Guru Granth Sahib will bless the occasion.

For a Sikh, Christianity is a foreign religion and Christ is a foreign guru (teacher). Indian Christians working among the Sikhs, especially the Jatt Sikhs, are beginning to see how much

of a barrier this is to reaching them with the Gospel.

Historically, Sikhs who have accepted the Gospel have relinquished much of their culture to join the "Christian" culture.

"Many are completely 'Christianized' and don't look any different from most Christians," Wayne said. "Unfortunately, this is a barrier to the Jatts."

In an effort to reach the Sikh culture for Christ, some Indian Christians have begun conducting church services in the style of a Sikh worship service. These services meet in believer's homes and have all of the characteristics of a church but also have a culturally contextualized style.

The congregation sits with a leader and discusses portions of Scripture.

"Some people are now using the satsang style of worship and trying to contextualize more so that they can maintain their culture while forsaking the false beliefs," Wayne said. "Satsang style uses music similar to the Sikh singing. The leader would likely sit rather than stand, and some people are using contextualized terms like 'Sat Guru' (True Teacher) for Jesus."

Satsang, which literally means "true company," is a congregationally led worship. Often one teacher will sit and read a passage from the Bible, and the congregation will meditate on it and discuss it.

In this way, Sikh-background Christians can match their style of worship to the culture to which they are accustomed, while remaining devoted to following and sharing Christ.